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ABSTRACT

The closing of a college is the topic of the third in a series of four transcripts of radio programs on college today. The dialogue includes: a press conference at Lone Mountain College, with a discussion of financial problems by the president and comments by Lone Mountain's student body president, college vice president, art department chairman, English department chairman, and students; the future of legal studies at Lone Mountain; difficulties at the University of Albuquerque, with comments by department heads, the president, and students; part-time faculty at Albuquerque; and the evening division at Albuquerque. (SPG)

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Options in Education
TRANSCRIPT:

Program No. 121:
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"COLLEGE TODAY -- PART III, COLLEGE CLOSINGS"

CHILD: A...

CHILD: B...

WOMAN: C...

MAN: D...

WOMAN: H...

MAN: I...

MAN: J...

CHILD: K...

MAN: L...

TEENAGER: M...

WOMAN: N...

WOMAN: O...

WOMAN: P...

MERROW: T-I-O-N-S -- Options, OPTIONS IN EDUCATION. From the ABC's of pre-school to the alphabet soup of government programs, this is OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

* * *

TAPE: The closing of a college can be either a traumatic defeat or an opportunity for improvement and growth. The academic excellence, creativity, and courage which have characterized Lone Mountain College and the University of San Francisco suggest only one response: to see this event as an opportunity for the improvement and growth of private Catholic higher education in San Francisco.

REINHARDT: That's what the winners say when one college takes over another.

MERROW: The losers, the ones from the college that got taken over, see things differently.

STUDENT: I was in the green lounge this morning, was reading. I was sitting on my favorite sofa in the sun with my little ash tray, and some people from USF came in. And they were very loud and very boisterous, and they were screaming and they were yelling and saying, "Oh, won't this be just terrific; we'll have our conference here, and they were talking about the archaic furniture, and, oh, the incredible wallpaper, and all this kind of stuff. And I thought, "Get out! Just go away, leave me alone; I don't want you here! Go! You're in my way. It was like there was no respect for me.

MERROW: But it is there's. They bought it.

STUDENT: They can have it, but they can't have me. Maybe someday I'll be a USF student, but I'm still a Lone Mountain Student. And it will be a long time before I can give it up.

MERROW: But her college, Lone Mountain College in San Francisco, is no more. The campus, high on a hill overlooking San Francisco Bay, the city, and the Golden Gate Bridge, has been bought by the San Francisco. And USF may take over some of Lone Mountain's programs; it will make room for Lone Mountain's students.

REINHARDT: Lone Mountain ran out of money and time. And so it's closing down after 57 years.

MERROW: But it's not the only college that has shut down. Since 1970, more than 150 colleges and universities have closed. The victims are invariably small, private, liberal arts colleges, often with religious affiliation.

REINHARDT: And that describes Lone Mountain and another college we'll be visiting during this edition of OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, the University of Albuquerque in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In that city, there's a death watch in progress. I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow. Let's go back to San Francisco and to the winners' press conference.

PRESS CONFERENCE AT LONE MOUNTAIN

Lo Schiavo: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming and welcome to USF. You all saw the slide show which we just presented to you. Perhaps you would be interested in an outline of the costs of acquiring Lone Mountain for us. The cost will be 5.8 million dollars...

REINHARDT: That's the president of the University of San Francisco, the Reverend John Lo Schiavo, at the press conference to announce that his university had bought Lone Mountain's campus.

Lo Schiavo: ...for renovation and moving, and modernization, perhaps, of some areas. So the total will be around 6.3 million dollars. Dr. Bernt Kolker is the president of Lone Mountain, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce him to you now. Maybe in a few moments he'll want to say a few words...

MERROW: Lone Mountain's president, Bernt Kolker, was acknowledged at the press conference, but he didn't speak. Later though, I asked him about the end of Lone Mountain.

BERNT KOLKER DESCRIBES FINANCES AT LONE MOUNTAIN

KOLKER: Did Lone Mountain have to close? Yes. It had to close unless, in some way or another, one of two things would have happened. A, somebody would have provided us with the money to stay open on an assured basis for at least another year. I think another year would have given us the opportunity to reverse things. That would have taken, in addition to whatever income we could generate, approximately a million dollars. And it should not have been loan funds. It should have been a gift. Because with loan funds, we simply would have faced the accelerated need to repay, and where would we repay it from?

The other possibility, of course, was a merger arrangement, or an affiliation with the University of San Francisco, in which Lone Mountain would have continued as a division of the University of San Francisco, say a college for women or a college for the performing arts, creative and performing arts...

MERROW: You explored those options?

KOLKER: We explored that. The Board of the University of San Francisco, I think wisely, rejected that latter option because it would have forced that board to assume the obligations, the financial obligations of Lone Mountain College, in addition to their own financial obligations and I think that would have been just too great a burden for them to carry.

MERROW: They could, after all, simply wait and see what happens.

KOLKER: They could have waited until we went bankrupt, and then offered money for the property.

MERROW: That's what they did?

KOLKER: No, they didn't. Because we didn't go bankrupt, and we aren't going bankrupt. We will, as the lawyers call it, become whole in paying off our obligations and in some manner settling with the employees of the college faculty and the staff so that their loss of employment will not be too drastic a thing. There will be some money for them to carry over.

REINHARDT: The president of Lone Mountain College, Bernt Kolker. Most of that conversation was about money, as it pretty much has to be when a college closes.

MERROW: But we did end up talking about the people, the faculty, staff, and students who are suddenly jobless or homeless.

REINHARDT: That's really our concern. What does happen to the people when the bottom drops out?

MERROW: But first, why did the bottom drop out at Lone Mountain College? It began as San Francisco College for Women, a small Catholic Women's college run by the Sisters of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. It became co-ed in 1970 and at that time changed its name to Lone Mountain.

REINHARDT: It also seems to have kept changing its mind about what kind of college it wanted to be. That is, it couldn't decide whether to be a traditional liberal arts college, or a special school for the arts, or an eclectic hodgepodge.

MERROW: The sisters turned over the running of the college to a lay board in 1976. Bernt Kolker was the first lay -- and the first male -- president. He arrived in 1977. I spent three days at Lone Mountain recently, and learned more of the history from Chris Hugo, the student body president.

LONE MOUNTAIN'S STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

HUGO: When I first got here, it was just starting to change. And then about a year after I got here, there was a political upheaval. Just a lot of problems; I can't get specific about it, because I really don't know what happened. But, the person who was editing the newspaper became sort of militant against the administration. The administration was, well, Sister Patch was president at that time. She was, I think, feeling ineffective. There was just a lot of tension. There were questions about who should make decisions. A lot of things were going on and I really don't know the specifics; cause I would probably be wrong about what exactly what went on. Anyway, there was just a lot of tension around, and Sister Patch quit. Then for that whole semester, it was awful. Anyway, a lot has happened.

MERROW: You say it was awful.

HUGO: Well, it was just tense. Meetings were awful. When I was student body president at the time, I think we had a full semester while Sister Patch was here that we knew she was leaving. And there was another person, the provost, who...a lot of people didn't like the provost at that time. She was Sister Patch's right hand person. There was question about who was making decisions and why wasn't it more of a democratic system. And the teachers were feeling that they really didn't have any say. Then there was a big cut-back in teachers, because there wasn't enough money. And the cut-back didn't seem fair. But anyway, there was a lot of tension.

Every meeting there would be some administrators there, and there would be some faculty there. And I just felt uncomfortable. Of course, even in the halls, the students were angry that the programs were being cut back, that certain teachers that they liked were being dropped, and so that was the problem. And then, the faculty unionized about eight months ago, I guess, six months ago, and that was another problem that caused an even bigger gap between administrators and faculty.

LONE MOUNTAIN'S VICE PRESIDENT, DR. RODERICK DUGLISS

MERROW: Dr. Roderick Dugliss is one of a number of administrators who came to Lone Mountain with the new president, Dr. Bernt Kolker, from the University of the Pacific, from Raymond College, a part of the University of the Pacific. Dugliss gave up a tenured position in Political Science to come here at Lone Mountain, not expecting that his job would only last one year. Let's talk about your own position. What are you going to do?

DUGLISS: Um, well, I'm looking for another job. I'm trying to see...I'm in a classically bad position, though maybe a new emerging minority; white,

white, middle, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, 42-year-old male, which puts me on the bottom of everybody's list in a number of ways. I'm at a point where I've got to see where I've got to be for the rest of my life. And I'm looking still in higher education; I'm not giving up on higher education.

MERROW: Teaching or administration.

DUGLISS: Teaching or administration. I've done a lot of teaching; I've enjoyed the teaching I've done. I think I do it well. I'm not sure how many settings exist where I do the teaching I do well. I think I am a pretty good administrator. This year has taught me a lot. It's been an intense year, needless to say.

MERROW: Are you angry or resentful about the way this has turned out?

DUGLISS: No, no, ... no.

* * *

STUDENT: I was all signed up, all set to go, signed into post-session, and as far as I know I passed the final review. That's the interpretation I have.

ADMINISTRATOR: Well, in the...

STUDENT: The other part of that is that I was told by other students that they were granted an option. They were granted an option some time last week to do one or the other.

ADMINISTRATOR: Well, they're all in...

STUDENT: I need to know where I am so I can settle my working situation, that's not your problem, but if I'm constantly up in the air and having to spend time running up here all the time; I'm spending my time when I would normally be working, either at painting or earning an income to pay my tuition, which I've done. We're getting off the issue. My issue is I want clarification.

ADMINISTRATOR: All right. I can't give you clarification at this moment. What were doing -- there is no post session, first of all you've got to understand that. What's going on is people are being signed up with extra units into the past semester. Look, I didn't set up the post session; the registrar set up the post session. There was no money to pay people in the post session. The dean has been trying to work out some kind of situation. He thought he'd solved it with setting this arrangement with USF, and we're all swimming in the middle of this thing. So, let me see you later, and I'll get some kind of word out on it. We'll do what we can. I don't want to make any promises to you if I can't deliver them, so...

STUDENT: I mean I feel I've sat here and not put pressure on you. I understood your problems. And I seem to be -- because of that -- seem to be the one left holding the bag.

ADMINISTRATOR: I know. Well, okay, come back and we'll work it out. We're not here to just be adamants.

* * *

MERROW: When a college closes, everyone involved suffers. Disruption is everywhere. That student is only eight hours short in getting here master in fine arts. She's trying to figure out a way that she can get that degree as soon as possible and get out into the job market. The college has set up something called a "post session" which will last somewhere between three and four weeks. She only needs eight credits. She hopes she can get the eight credits in that three week session and get her degree. But, unfortunately, she's not an undergraduate, or there's some confusion. Therefore there's some disruption. She's in the art department. Robert Brawley is chairman of the art department, and maybe he can explain what was going on, not so much about her, but in general what you do to try to minimize the disruption of her life and the lives of the other students.

LONE MOUNTAIN'S ART DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN

BRAWLEY: Well, you heard her talk that certain exceptions were being made, and we're trying to ameliorate the situation. The post session -- we don't regard that as a valid educational experience, three to four weeks of getting eight graduate units is pure ridiculousness. And it was put into effect only to save the students' investment in their own careers and because we didn't know what else to do. Not we're trying to salvage what we can of the program, being as we have some alternatives now. In her case, the committee met on her work which would be a normal review prior to final project, and it was felt that she needed more time for development. And we were closing up; what were we going to do? We recommended that she take the session at the University of San Francisco so her development could continue. But she wishes to terminate as soon as possible. I can't blame her on this. On the other hand, you know, we have to have some attitude about educational integrity, about our programs which we've worked so hard to build, and we feel are good programs because we have a sense of what is quality.

MERROW: Some random thoughts about Lone Mountain college. I just walked through the dormitories, and college dormitories smell the way they used to. I went to the library also; walked through the stacks, and I didn't see a book that was published after 1960. Now, I'm sure there are some, but there are an awful lot of very old books there. It looks as if the collection has suffered. Administrators leave at 5:00 if not before. I haven't seen many students who aren't majoring in the creative arts and the dance program. They're the ones -- again, random impression -- they're the ones that are filled with excitement about the place. I have the sense that Lone Mountain never really made up its mind what it was going to be. Whether it was going to be a place with the creative arts and the special kinds of programs; or whether it was going to try to remain a traditional liberal arts college. And what it ended up doing, I guess, is marry the two and the marriage hasn't worked, and so it's gone.

At least half of the students I've met are transfer students from somewhere else, often from two or three other colleges. So Lone Mountain is a last place, or that's what they hoped; it would be the last college they would have to go to. That's not going to work out that way though, obviously.

THE VIEWS OF LONE MOUNTAIN STUDENTS

STUDENT: The program has been more exciting this semester, really more exciting this year than it has been. And I've been in -- this is my third year. And I think it's that sense of, first of all just not wanting to believe that it's over. But people really are trying things here that they've never done before. And so, it's kind of like, "Let's get it all in now, and we'll deal with it later."

MERROW: There's a book On the Beach, where the nuclear bomb has gone off and the cloud is approaching, and you know you only have 24 hours, or whatever it is. And one of the characters gets himself a racing car and goes and drives in a drag race of some sort, a race, because he's always wanted to do that. That's what you're talking about.

STUDENT: Absolutely. Absolutely. There was a period about two, three weeks ago where if you were here at night or on the weekends, the place was filled with dance students, myself included. I mean, every time you'd walk out someone would say, "What are you doing here?"

STUDENT: I was looking through college catalogues and I wanted some place small, and unfortunately this was a little too small 'cause it's closing down not.

MERROW: You say it with a smile. Are you sad?

STUDENT: Um, yeah. 'Cause I think it's a really neat place, and I don't think these kind of places are, you know, few and far between. So, yeah, I am kind of sad

STUDENT: I was very shocked. I realized that everyone was in shock, and I was just -- when I first heard it, my mouth hung open. I didn't hear anything about rumors until the announcement was made. And the second day of orientation

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activities -- I was unsure what to do then. I felt that I still wanted to go ahead and apply anyway, because, you know, even one semester of pursuing a good course, and just getting back into college at the time I felt was the right decision, rather than hanging back and waiting to see what would happen next, or looking for a better college.

MERROW: It seems to me as if it would be like a, you know when you're walking down the stairs and you've miscalculated the number of steps, and you think you're at the bottom, and you step out assuming it's going to be level and there's another step. And there's that sudden feeling of weightlessness and surprise. I mean, that seems that it would be like that; all of a sudden kind of having the bottom drop out from under you.

STUDENT: It was like having the carpet pulled out right from under my feet. It took me a couple of days to get over the shock. And registration was six days afterwards and I figured, "Well, why not, you know. It's an excellent college." I wanted to get into the college scene and start doing it now, so I figured why not just go ahead and do it?

MERROW: You said you were angry. You don't sound angry, but you say you're angry. Are you angry at anybody or anything?

STUDENT: I suppose what I'm angry -- well, what I'm angriest about is feeling that there aren't alternatives, either in the way that USF has been handling, picking us up. I'm angry at the kind of disrespect that they've shown the students and the faculty by not indicating to us whether or not the program will picked up. And so, I have this sense of limbo. I'm trying to be optimistic that the program will be picked up because that's what I would like to do. But I don't know. So it means a lot of personal decisions I need to make are waiting -- you know, are just sort of hanging. I'm angry because I'm ready to be through with school.

MERROW: What are you going to do next year?

STUDENT: I don't really know, probably go to UCLA in the winter quarter, 'cause it's too late to transfer for fall.

MERROW: And you want to major in English?

STUDENT: Yes. Linguistics, something like that.

MERROW: And you, the freshman, what are you going to do?

STUDENT: Right now I'm just waiting to find out. I've applied to the University of Arizona and Long Beach State. And, I don't know. I have an undeclared major, so I'm just sort of waiting.

* * *

MERROW: Other colleges are interested in the students at Lone Mountain. They're also interested in the programs. Carolyn Farren is the director of the Legal Studies Program at Lone Mountain. And a couple of colleges have talked to her about moving the whole program, lock, stock, and barrel, over to their institution.

THE FUTURE OF LEGAL STUDIES AT LONE MOUNTAIN

MERROW: What about the have-nots? What about the faculty members who aren't likely to be picked up -- to be offered jobs?

FARREN: I don't know what they're going to do. I think some of them are going to have to consider a change in what they do. Or they're going to have to consider moving out of the area into other colleges in more remote areas.

MERROW: Is there any kind of tension when you sit down in the faculty lounge to have coffee, and, you know, you must know who the haves are and who the have-nots are. Is there any kind of tension?

FARREN: No, because we're not competing for the same jobs for one thing. I don't think anyone wishes that someone else wouldn't get a job. If I were perhaps doing something different in English and were putting other people out of work in a department like that, then there might be.

* * *

MERROW: Some faculty members at Lone Mountain will go right over to the University of San Francisco; that's the way it looks right now. Some of the graduate programs, perhaps a dance program, programs that have enough students and that are unique to Lone Mountain and that USF decides it wants. A lot of teachers -- a lot of the faculty members -- won't find jobs waiting for them at the University of San Francisco, and because of the conditions in higher education generally, they may not find jobs waiting for them anywhere.

Dr. James Highsmith is chairman of the English department. He's been here for nine years. He has a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. He's one of the unlucky ones; there's no job waiting for him at the University of San Francisco. And for all he knows right now, there may not be a teaching job for him anywhere. He's written 50 letters asking for jobs, asking for interviews -- letters of inquiry. What's that led to? Three or four interviews so far and a suggestion that maybe he can catch on as part-time instructor at a community college.

LONE MOUNTAIN'S ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN

MERROW: What's your reaction to that? You've put in nine years. You're chairman of the English department. You're chairman of the Independent Studies department. Do you feel shortchanged?

HIGHSMITH: Well, my reaction should be one of, oh, discouragement and bitterness, but personally I don't feel that. I feel that for my own life it might be a chance to re-evaluate my energies and to consider other directions. I'm not necessarily geared to only the academ. I think that right now I don't know specifically, but there may be other possibilities either in quasi-academic fundtions, or non-academic functions that I can explore given time; and I will have some time now.

MERROW: Are you a fighter? I mean, are you going to go out there and struggle and look for jobs, and demand something from this place as it closes down?

HIGHSMITH: I'm not a fighter, but I do have energy, and I'm going to explore and see what I can come up with in my own way.

MERROW: You say that you feel good about this place and that you've grown here. One thing that hasn't grown is your salary. After nine years, and you're now an associate professor and chairman directing two programs, you're making less than $14,000. That suggests to me, maybe, that the administration has been taking advantage of you.

HIGHSMITH: It's hard to answer to that. I, I find that many of the benefits that I have received here in terms of freedom and personal contact, the opportunity to write my own schedule of what I want to do and when I want to do it. These things have value that you don't get in a salaried job in other places. And I have accepted this. I have had opportunities to go to other places while I've been here at much higher salary. But because of these advantages and because of the chance to live in an exciting city like San Francisco, these things have made me, you know, stay.

MERROW: Are you sad that Lone Mountain is closing?

HIGHSMITH: Personally, I'm not sad. I've been here for nine years, and perhaps nine years is enough at one place; and so, personally I'm ready for some change and for some more growth.

MERROW: Dr. James Highsmith who's chairman of the English department, who's office is filled with books, as I suppose any good English professor's office ought to be. He won't be at Lone Mountain, nor will he be at University of San Francisco next year. He's not sure where he's going.

MORE FROM CAROLYN FARREN

MERROW: A man came in and took over as president of this college less than a year ago. Now why would someone do that? I mean, if you look at the books you say, "Hey, we're in real trouble here." Why would someone come in and take a job that way, under those conditions?

FARREN: Well, he firmly believed that he would be able to turn the college around, but at the same time I think there was at least an implicit agreement that he would be given time to operate, time in which to try to be successful. And I believe that closing the doors after he had been here about six months was perhaps not what was understood that would happen. And I'm not putting any blame anywhere, except that I think that there was a certain agreement that everyone understood, including the faculty and everyone else.

MERROW: You say you're not putting any blame anywhere, but you just said he got sandbagged, that somebody said he'd have a certain amount of time and he only got six months. You are putting blame. You're a lawyer.

FARREN: Well, I'm not saying necessarily that it was in bad faith. I think what happened was that they did an audit in January and they panicked. And the various people involved weren't willing to open up this next semester without knowing we had funds to make it through the semester; I support that decision wholeheartedly. However, I feel that certain organizations could have come up with some money to help us through. This property is worthwhile. It would have just meant taking a third mortgage on the property and operating at least till the end of the year, and seeing how we would do at that point.

MERROW: When you say "certain organizations" do you mean the sisters?

FARREN: Yes, and even there may have been potential loans given from other institutions. As I said, the property is worth more than the liens against it. That's a given. And so the loan potential was there that could have carried us through and allowed us to get back on our feet. And I think they hired Bernt Kolker with that idea in mind.

MERROW: But he never got the chance.

FARREN: No. You can't turn a college around in six months. He started here about August 1. He came in July 1 and then had some vacation and started full-time work August 1 with his full administration. And the college was closed about six months later. So there was nothing he could have done. The admissions for September were already decided by the time he came in. There couldn't have been increased -- his only hope was for increasing it for the next September, which he never had a chance to do.

MORE FROM PRESIDENT BERNT KOLKER

MERROW: You came here in late 1977 expecting to have a number of years to turn this place around. You didn't even get a year.

KOLKER: That's right. And the reason for it was that the economics of the place were far worse than the board of trustees realized. And as a consequence from which they were able to share with me.

MERROW: When the financial picture began to emerge in late 1977 and you realized that you needed money just to meet the next payroll, you went to the sisters of the Society of the Sacred Heart. You expected they would give you another loan. Yet they didn't.

KOLKER: That's correct. The sisters, I think, earnestly tried to lend us the amount of money we needed. They concluded however, in conjunction with their financial advisors, that they couldn't risk -- and after all, it would have been a risk -- that they couldn't risk the possible loss of that money, because with the shrinking size of their order, the shrinking number of new entrants into the order, and their commitment to lifetime care of all their membership, it would have made inroads into their -- what you might call their social security funds, their retirement funds. And they finally concluded that they simply could not put any more money at our disposal.

MERROW: What does the closing of Lone Mountain College mean to your

10-A

career. You're 61 years old; you've come into a college and you were supposed to turn it around and you didn't. Whether or not that's your fault, I have no idea. But, it certainly looks -- some people are going to say, "Oh-oh, look at this man. He was hired to do this and six months later the college went out of business. Is your career through?

KOLKER: No. My career as a college president may be through, but then, I'm not particularly interested in being a college president. I've turned down probably more college presidencies than I can remember. I was interested in this college essentially because of the tremendous challenge it offered and because of the particular difficulties which needed to be -- the particular problems which needed to be solved. The fact that they were not capable of solution is really totally a different matter. As far as my own career is concerned, I have a number of plans which are probably going to develop and which in no way are going to be affected by what happened to Lone Mountain College.

MERROW: Do you have any regrets about having come here?

KOLKER: Not at all, not at all. It was a good fight. It was a worthwhile fight. We might have won. Somebody had to do what had to be done. I probably was one of the very few people who had the guts to do it and who might have succeeded if a few things might have happened that didn't happen. As I recall, being told by the presidential search committee, there were 130 or 140 different applicants for this job. They chose me for reasons of their own. I'm pleased to have had the chance and I don't regret it for a moment.

You were going to ask a question about an emotional attachment. I have long since made it a practice not to have emotional attachments to my jobs. When you have an emotional attachment to your job you can't do the job.

REINHARDT: Bernt Kolker, the president, soon to be former president, of Lone Mountain College in San Francisco. It's out of business, bought by the University of San Francisco, one block away.

MERROW: What happens to the 57 faculty members? Well, they're hoping for a full year's pay for everyone who's been teaching there for at least three years with smaller portions for the newer teachers. That's being bargained about right now. The trustees will ultimately decide, just as they'll decide how much severance pay President Kolker and the other top administrators will get.

REINHARDT: Lone Mountain College is just one of more than 150 colleges and universities that have closed in the past eight years. But what's staggering about those numbers is the imbalance between public and private institutions. Of the 150, only 30 have been public institutions.

MERROW: During that same time, more than 120 private colleges have folded. A logical conclusion: Private higher education cannot compete with publically supported colleges and universities, with their pipeline into the public treasury.

REINHARDT: In Albuquerque, New Mexico, that fact is made dramatically clear by what's happening to the University of Albuquerque, another four year, private college. It's on the verge of going under for the last. And ready to take its place -- a two year publically supported community college.

MERROW: The University of Albuquerque, like Lone Mountain College, was run by an order of nuns. And, just as in the case of Lone Mountain, the sisters found they could no longer support the college, so they turned it over to a lay board.

REINHARDT: Today, the University of Albuquerque is more than three million dollars in debt, and it's losing more money every year.

MERROW: In the last 60s and early 70s, they overbuilt. There are now two nearly-empty dormitories on campus.

REINHARDT: The University of Albuquerque sits on a mesa overlooking the Rio Grande River, the City of Albuquerque, and, off in the distance, the University of New Mexico.

10-B

MERROW: That University, U.N.M., has over 21,000 students. The University of Albuquerque has 2,700, and that number is dropping.

REINHARDT: The University of New Mexico, a public institution, charges $22 per credit hour. The University of Albuquerque, which is private, charged $55 this year and is increasing the fee to $63 in the fall...

MERROW: ...if it's open.

REINHARDT: But the University of Albuquerque has been fighting to survive by making itself into what the community doesn't have: a community college. That's been going on for six or seven years now, and today, 70 percent of its programs are two-year courses, leasing to an associate's degree, that is, a two-year degree.

MERROW: Now the state is on the verge of creating a community college in Albuquerque, and the University of Albuquerque desperately wants to be that school. The sisters have offered to sell the campus at a bargain price, and the college administration is working hard to convince the citizens of Albuquerque to vote "yes" on an upcoming referendum.

REINHARDT: That would mean the end of private higher education in Albuquerque. But it would also mean getting out of debt and saving jobs for some of the faculty.

MERROW: I spent three days on the campus at the University of Albuquerque recently, and one of the people I talked with was Dr. Muriel Latham-Pfieffer, head of the Department of Language and Literature. I asked her what the faculty would do if next week the administration suddenly announced that the college had to shut down, immediately, because the money had run out.

BAD TIMES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

LATHAM-PFIEFFER: Um, I think the faculty would say, "You bettor have a committee of faculty come and sit with you. And let's look at things, and let's find out whether this is indeed true."

MERROW: Suppose the administration says, "Well, we've already looked at things and we know that it is true."

LATHAM-PFIEFFER: I con't want to suppose that, because I don't thing that the administration will. I don't think --

MERROW: But if they did, what would you do?

LATHAM-PFIEFFER: What you're saying, you're doing a lot of "ifs" about this, and so you're painting a very black picture. You're saying, first, that the school's going to close completely; secondly, in the process of the school closing, that the administration is going to be utterly arbitrary about the manner in which it's done. I don't believe either one. And obviously, what would happen would be that if they did those two things, then simply everyone would be without a job. But I don't think this is what's going to happen.

ALBUQUERQUE DEPARTMENT HEAD FRANK WIEMAN

MERROW: I'm now with Frank Wieman, who's the chairman of the Department of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies, which is a combined department, obviously. The University of Albuquerque, as a Christian-oriented college, has a requirement for two courses, in either Religious Studies or Philosophy, which in effect gives his department a captive audience. Now if the change that is going on continues and the university survives as a two-year community college, that requirement might go, and, in fact, so might the whole department, and so might your job.

WIEMAN: Right. That's certainly true, I think.

MERROW: So you're looking for things to do to make yourself necessary to the institution.

WIEMAN: Yeah, I'm kind of trying to find a way to make myself indispensable. (laughs)

MERROW: You're also designing a two-year program in Religious Studies which you hope will fly as a degree program, an associate degree program at a community college.

WIEMAN: That's right. We've all, during this spring, got the whole thing worked together and approved by the board. The first time people would have a chance to register for that would be the fall We had requests from a number of people, and when it was passed and advertised in the newspapers we had a number of phone calls about it.

MERROW: You say a number of people, a number of phone calls. How big or how small were those numbers?

WIEMAN: The phone calle were probably three or four. But in conversation, I've had -- I don't know -- I talked one time to a group of about 30 people at one of the Lutheran churches. And certainly as a group, they expressed an interest in having such a thing available. I've also talked here with what's known as the Ministerial Alliance of Albuquerque, the alliance of practically all Protestant churches. The ministers and especially the women associates who are heading education programs thought that would be something very useful for their teachers and various people who work around the church.

MERROW: Are you kind of grabbing at straws?

WIEMAN: Yes, I think we are.

MERROW: How old are you?

WIEMAN: I'm 56 right now.

MERROW: Does it bother you? I mean, does it create a high level of anxiety, the thought that there may be no job for you next year or the year after?

WIEMAN: Not really. Of course, I should add, I'm alone; I don't have a family. So, if I had that I would certainly have a greater anxiety. No, it really doesn't. A little bit, but I kind of always feel something will turn up.

MERROW: You don't have a family. But many of the faculty members here do have families, and their -- it would be fair to speculate -- their level of anxiety is higher then.

WIEMAN: Oh, definitely. Many of them, well, I presume all of them, are looking around for other possibilities. Some are already doing part-time insurance selling. The man with me full-time in religious studies, and the part-time, they are getting various other kinds of speaking engagements, not enough to support them, but... One of them is doing a certain amount of adobe construction, or supervising adobe construction. Yeah, I would say that is probably a cause of certain tension around here at present, the anxiety of people with famililes as to what they're going to do.

MERROW: That's Frank Wieman, who's the chairman of the Department of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies here at the University of Albuquerque.

ALBUQUERQUE'S DR. MURIEL STEVENSON

STEVENSON: I'm a tenured professor, and tenured doesn't mean that much any more, I don't think, from that standpoint. Because, in case of financial exigency, you're bound to go down anyway. I don't know; I'm just not that worried about it myself. I thing we're going to survive. We've gone through crisis after crisis and we've managed to come up every single time. And I think we're a very adaptable place, and I just think we'll adapt again.

MERROW: Is this what you imagined college teaching would be like when you were back in graduate school working on your doctorate?

STEVENSON: No, it isn't. (laughs) No, I kind of thought maybe I'd be in an ivory tower somewhere, just really concentrating on my own little area. It's really amazing what happens.

MERROW: Ivory tower this is not.

STEVENSON: No. No, but this is a friendly tower.

MERROW: That's Dr. Muriel Stevenson, who's Assistant Academic Dean for Careers and Special Programs here at the University of Albuquerque.

ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS HEAD DR. JIM MORLEY

MERROW: Jim Morley is chairman of the Department of Arts and Communications, basically the theatre department. He's been a faculty member here at the University of Albuquerque for 22 years.

MORLEY: I can always make a living. I can always direct a play. I can always open a shop making miniatures or something like that.

MERROW: That's not the way I've heard it. I've heard that one of the reasons you're opposed to making the U of A into a community college is that you're worried about your own position, which seems reasonable.

MORLEY: Where did you hear that? You leave me ... well, I just don't know how to answer that because it's not a truth. And I can't imagine who would have said that, and why. I just don't understand that one.

MERROW: Well, let's speculate on setting up a community college. You'd set up your math department, your English department. You've have some languages and...

MORLEY: And a theatre department.

MERROW: Well, you said "and a theatre department." I'm not sure that would be on anybody else's list of priorities. It would be on mine, but...

MORLEY: ... well, we're doing a comparative study right now, and we used, I don't know, there's half a dozen colleges that we've taken -- we're doing cross-references on how many theatre courses are offered. Well, every department is doing it. And we find very healthy theatre departments in community colleges around the country.

MERROW: You're also trying to create a two-year theatre arts program, so that people can get a community college-type degree...

MORLEY: No, no. Associate of Arts degree. But that's part of the program of the University of Albuquerque; we just have entered that too.

MERROW: Now wait a minute. I'm not that naive. You created that two-year program in anticipation of...

MORLEY: No no no. It was done long before we even knew this was happening.

MERROW: You have that program now?

MORLEY: Oh, yeah.

MERROW: How many students in it?

MORLEY: No, that's just going into effect as a two-year program -- we passed it a year ago and we're just getting students now for it.

MERROW: And my original point was that you were setting this program up as a way of adaptation...

MORLEY: No, you're giving a different reason for it. That's not the reason. That's not the reason at all.

MERROW: You're telling me it just happens to be something you wanted to do?

MORLEY: Yes sir, yes sir. Absolutely. We wanted this two-year program.

MERROW: The facts, the reality of the university situation was not a factor?

MORLEY: Not at all.

MERROW: This talk about a community college...

MORLEY: Not at all. In fact, I just heard about the two-year college program... I work at Yale every summer. And I came back last summer and there was all this news on the radio about community college and U of A and all this, and I was totally confused; I had never heard of it before the end of this last summer. And perhaps I was naive. Maybe this was happening and I just didn't know about it. Maybe I should have gone to more faculty meetings.

MERROW: That's Jim Morley who's chairman of the Department of Arts and Communications, and who's been a faculty member at the University of Albuquerque for 22 years.

PART-TIME FACULTY AT ALBUQUERQUE

MERROW: Jerry Shea is one of the faculty members who might not survive if the University of Albuquerque becomes a community college. He's a part-time employee, that is, he teaches -- he's not a full-time professor. He's what they call "adjunct." This is a way universities and colleges have of hiring people without having to pay the full freight, the benefits and so on. What's the anxiety level? What manifestations do you find yourself?

SHEA: It varies considerably. It depends on how you feel when you get up in the morning on a particular day. Mostly it seems to me that you can, if you're not careful, you can get a sense that it's more your fault that you're part-time than it is the general physical situation of the -- the general student situation. Which I think in large part, in most cases, is not true.

MERROW: You can start blaming yourself.

SHEA: Indeed. You can get very depressed.

MERROW: Has that happened to you?

SHEA: Oh, very often. Very often.

MERROW: What's the antidote?

SHEA: Uh, a good night's sleep. Clip the dog. Play with your son. Ride your bicycle. Scream. Beat on the floor. Have a drink. Whatever.

MERROW: Do you like teaching?

SHEA: I like teaching very much.

MERROW: Is this what you expected college teaching was going to be like when you were back working on your master's or your doctorate?

SHEA: Uh, around about 1970 or '71, I think all of us, if we had a lobe to pur brains, expected it. So I can't say -- I'd like to say that I was Shanghaid and that the bottom dropped out and that I was a babe walking into this, but I wasn't. The nice part about -- or not the nice part, but the comfort or salve of being part-time -- is that you're so used to brinksmanship, that you're not nearly as unsettled as some poor fellow who's got, you know, "x" years of tenure in and a very comfortable position. Down he goes. Uh, toughens one up; there really is nothing quite like it.

MERROW: That's Jerry Shea, who's a part-time English and composition teacher at the University of Albuquerque, who's hoping that plans go through, that the University becomes a community college, and that his job will be saved.

THE EVENING DIVISION AT ALBUQUERQUE

MERROW: The most exciting place I found at the University of Albuquerque is the Evening Division. It's two different places actually. About

100 of the 2,700 students are evening students. They're much older, and they're working full-time; going to school in the evening to get an associate's degree, a two-year degree; or perhaps to get a four-year degree. Classes are held in two places. An old high school, or on the Air Force base just on the outskirts of Albuquerque. I'm walking through Building 602 at Kirkland Air Force Base. It's where the evening classes at the University of Albuquerque meet. I'm with Vic Brockman who's the director. He's explaining that he's got, oh, about 800 students who come here on Tuesday and Thursday nights during the week, a thriving program. How many classes?

BROCKMAN: Thirteen classes, a total of 26 classes. Thirteen on Monday and Wednesday; thirteen on Tuesday and Thursday.

MERROW: Courses in what?

BROCKMAN Varying anywhere from freshman remedial courses through senior 400 level courses. We have basic economics that you just saw. I have psychology, advanced accounting, principles of accounting, traffic management, airport planning design.

MERROW: You're really running a community college here.

BROCKMAN: Yes. It is a community college and we can offer the student the possibility of getting a four-year degree at night. We can offer just about every course they need. There are a few lab courses where they might have to go to the campus. I don't have the lab facilities in this building. But I can offer -- well, business is our biggest draw.

MERROW: Now, you've got 800 right now. Would enrollment be a lot larger if tuition were $15 a credit hour, instead of $55 a credit hour?

BROCKMAN: I wouldn't be able to house them. In other words, yes. I figure we'd probably run 5,00 students if tuition were lower.

MERROW: Do you have a basis for saying that, or is that just a hunch?

BROCKMAN: I have a basis for saying it with the demand from the people in town who say "I'd love to take the courses for credit, but I can't afford it." And I really believe this is a big possibility here in town for a good community college.

MERROW: Now, what's going on here in the hall? People sitting around smoking cigarettes.

BROCKMAN: This is what? Psychology?

STUDENT: Psychology 370.

BROCKMAN: All right. So they're on their coffee and smoking break. I don't allow smoking in the classroom. But they can come out in the hall to smoke. If you care to meet the instructor. Geneva, Geneva, front and center please! Come here.

NIXON: What did I do? I didn't do it.

BROCKMAN: You didn't do a thing. This is Geneva Nixon, teaching psychology. And what psych class is this?

NIXON: Psych 370.

BROCKMAN: What's that?

NIXON: Small Group Behavior.

BROCKMAN: She happens to be one of the part-time working force. The majority of the instructors here at night are full-time faculty who carry on part of their teaching in the evening.

MERROW: Is this part of their teaching load, or are they adding to their teaching load?

BROCKMAN: The majority of them, it's part of the teaching load. There are a few where it would be what we call an overload, over their normal teaching requirements.

MERROW: And most of the people who sign up for these courses are working full-time.

BROCKMAN: Anybody in the hallway here who is not fully employed?

STUDENT: Yeah.

BROCKMAN: You're working during the -- yeah, we've got a couple. But most of them, Air Force, downtown city jail --

STUDENT: Jail commander, you bring them in...

BROCKMAN: Jail commander.

MERROW: Jail commander.

BROCKMAN: We have a wide variety of students. Not too many youngsters. Most people are fully employed.

MERROW: So this is a way to jump up the career ladder for them.

BROCKMAN: Most of the people have to work for the living, and it's the only place where they can possibly get a full, four-year degree at night. It may take them five years or six years.

MERROW: Why can't they do it through the University of New Mexico?

BROCKMAN: The University of New Mexico is offering evening classes, but they've only done it for a year. But they are still not guaranteeing that they will offer enough for a person to get a four-year degree at night.

MERROW: So most of the people I see here are actually majoring in something or working on a degree?

BROCKMAN: That's right. Business runs about 60, 65 percent. Law enforcement, criminology, psychology; I have a few English majors, a few political science majors. When I say business, that's including public administration and accounting, as well as general business.

MERROW: Thanks a lot. That's Vic Brockman, head of the adult evening program. I think I'll talk to some students.

STUDENTS IN THE LOUNGE AT ALBUQUERQUE

MERROW: This is the coffee line, huh? What are you majoring in?

STUDENT: Criminology.

MERROW: How about you? What are you majoring in?

STUDENT: Nursing.

STUDENT: I'm working on my associate's in aircraft technology right now.

STUDENT: Public administration.

STUDENT: Business admin.

MERROW: What are you majoring in?

STUDENT: Nothing. I just don't have any major yet.

MERROW: You are taking courses?

STUDENT: Yes.

MERROW: How about you? What are you majoring in?

STUDENT: Criminal sociology.

STUDENT: Not anything in particular. Just taking courses.

STUDENT: Psychology.

STUDENT: Electrical engineering.

STUDENT: Business administration.

STUDENT: Same here. Business administration.

STUDENT: Business administration.

STUDENT: Public administration.

STUDENT: Math.

STUDENT: Business

STUDENT: Criminology.

STUDENT: Business.

MERROW: How long is it going to take you to get your degree?

STUDENT: Well, I've been going for about a year and a half. I should have it by next fall.

MERROW: That's the two-year degree.

STUDENT: Uh, yeah.

MERROW: After that, what?

STUDENT: A B.A. in business.

MERROW: You're going to stay here at this university?

STUDENT: It depends on if the service keeps me here or not.

MERROW: It depends on whether there's still a university, I suppose.

STUDENT: Yeah, right. (laughs)

ALBUQUERQUE'S PRESIDENT, DR. LARRY SMITH

MERROW: Dr. Larry Smith is president of the University of Albuquerque. He's been president since September, 1976, and it's his job to preside over the transition that's taking place, the decisions that are going to be made in the next six months or so that will determine what happens to the University of Albuquerque. He's a slow-talking, careful man who's decision and the board's decision seems to be to bring about a transfer of the University of Albuquerque to public status, that is, make the University of Albuquerque into a community college, make it possible for the University of Albuquerque to become a community college, and have as many of the University's programs and as much of the physical plant be that community college. Is that fair?

SMITH: Yes, that's a fair statement.

MERROW: Now, I've been on this campus for three days. And, it's a beautiful campus; it's a little run-down, a little ragged around the edges, but it doesn't really feel like a college. There isn't the kind of vitality -- the sense you get at most colleges. Until I went to your evening classes -- and there there's all the hustle and bustle and all the liveliness of a college campus.

SMITH: Well, I think that's understandable why, and I felt the same way the first few months that I was here. Part of it is, we have really a very small percentage of our classes being offered -- or, I should say, our student credit hour load being offered -- on the main campus. We have less than 150 of the traditional college students living on the main campus.

MERROW: And you have room for 400.

SMITH: Right. And the average age of our students is 28, and many of them just do not have the typical college student concerns.

MERROW: I've talked to quite a few members of the faculty, and I have an impression of a beleaguered, almost punch-drunk group of people, waiting to see, trying to find out where the next blow is coming from, and just absorb it and survive.

SMITH: Well, I think the faculty in this situation has a right to be beleaguered. Let me say from my standpoint, though, they are still a very effective faculty in the classroom. And, believe it or not, we have been engaged in what would normally called long-range planning in the last year. And they have been very productive.

MERROW: For you and for the board, it's a simple matter of dollars and cents. You look and you see that you have a 3.25 million dollar deficit, that you're running at a loss every year, that the Sisters of St. Francis who own the place are not willing any longer to bail you out. So, you just can't keep running in the rad.

SMITH: Yes, now let's call that a three and a half million dollar debt, not deficit.

MERROW: But there is a deficit each year as well, even though you've reduced it substantially in the last couple years.

SMITH: We think the projected deficit for this year is down to $17,000, so we might make this one in the black. But if we do, it will be the first year in a number of years. If there was any mistake that was make in the University of Albuquerque planning, it was in not recognizing early enough the critical need for endowment or for a continuing alumni base of support. For example, typically, a private institution will receive between 20 and 40 percent of their operating income either through sustaining gifts or endowment returns. The University of Albuquerque has never in any year approached even five to ten percent, much less twenty. And I think this is probably the critical lack. I don't see a long-term role for the private institutions who do not have these things working for them.

MERROW: If the University of Albuquerque, with its subsidy from the Sisters of St. Francis, with its much lower salaries, if it couldn't survive, then an awful lot of private institutions may not be able to survive either.

SMITH: I would think so.

REINHARDT: Dr. Larry Smith, president of the University of Albuquerque, which is re-making itself into a community college, in hopes that the city and state will agree to take it over and make it into a public community college.

MERROW: Smith and others also hope the state will buy the campus for about five million dollars.

REINHARDT: For this to happen, the voters must approve, in early September, and then the state legislature must put up the money.

MERROW: There are a lot of other factors too: The plan could be scuttled by the local board of education, which runs a vocational technical school, or by the University of New Mexico, which some say does not want another public institution in Albuquerque.

REINHARDT: But whatever happens, it looks as if private higher education in Albuquerque will soon be no more. That's what the University's leadership is assuming, anyway.

MERROW: And that's what the students think too. Just a few days ago, the largest graduating class in the school's history, 461, got their diplomas. Why? Because a lot of students who had been dawdling along suddenly realized that this might be their last chance to get a diploma from the University of Albuquerque.

REINHARDT: The same thing happened at Lone Mountain College in San Francisco. There, at least 350 will graduate, and when the special three-week and eight-week probrams end, probably another 100 will have gotten diplomas -- the last ones ever from Lone Mountain College.

* * *

MERROW: This is part three of our four-part series on "College Today." This program has shown the sadder side of things. Next week: What many colleges are doing to stay afloat.

REINHARDT: They're recruiting older people, and calling it "Lifelong Learning."

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REINHARDT: OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is written and produced by John Merrow. The Associate Producer is Katharine Ferguson. The Assistant Producer is Natalie Iglitz. Technical assistance for this program by Bob Nock. I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow. And this is NPR, National Public Radio.